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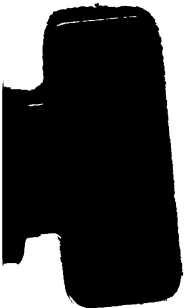
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Oxford - from
the Author*

ON
A PAINTING
DISCOVERED IN
CHALDON CHURCH, SURREY,
1870.

BY
J. G. WALLER.

LONDON:
MITCHELL AND HUGHES, 140 WARDOUR STREET, W.

1885.



W. R. Tynanas, Lith.

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Jan 1 1885

ON A PAINTING DISCOVERED IN CHALDON CHURCH, SURREY, 1870.

CHALDON is situated on the chalk elevation midway between Merstham and Caterham. The church, the parsonage, four farmhouses, four villa residences, and some labourers' cottages, without a shop or public-house, constitute the parish.

The population, according to the last Census, is 165 souls. Chaldon Court, one of the four farmhouses, was formerly the Manor House; and the style of construction bears evidence of its having been erected in the sixteenth century.

Chaldon is mentioned in Doomsday Book, being there spelt Chalvedone.* In a charter of Frithewald, "Subregulus Provinciæ Surrianorum,"† dated in 727, V mansas, "apud Chepestede cum Chalvedune," were granted to the monastery of Chertsey. This grant was confirmed by King Eadgar‡ in 967, the names of places being spelt as above. In 1062 the grant was again confirmed by King Eadweard; XX mansas being mentioned, "cum Cudredesdune, et cum Cealfadune."§

* The late E. V. Austin, Hon. Secretary of the Surrey Archaeological Society, derived Chaldon as *Cealfadune*, Calf-down. But I must now object to that as not in accord with the usual meaning of a prefix, which generally refers to natural characters, and also because he had taken the latest and not the earliest Saxon form. My own opinion is that it is more likely the prefix came from *Cealwa*, *i.e.* bald or bare. The form Chalvedon still occurs in Essex, near Pitsea; and Kelvedon, in same county, seems to be but a variation in etymology.

† *Codex Diplomaticus*, vol. v., p. 19.

‡ *Ib.*, vol. iii., p. 8.

§ *Ib.*, vol. iv., p. 152.

The place is so retired, it is difficult to believe you are within twenty miles of London; and it belongs to a part of Surrey renowned for its scenery, yet nevertheless not so well known to the dwellers in the metropolis as it deserves to be. There were no made roads leading from the adjoining parishes to Chaldon, until about fifteen years ago (1870); nothing but tracks across the downs and commons led the stranger to the spot; and if in our time so secluded, what must have been the case when the early church was erected?

The Pilgrim's Way, which passed through Chaldon from Merstham on the west, to Godstone on the east, is easily traced along the edge of the downs. The Roman road is said to have passed from Godstone to Woodcote through the parish; but no traces of it are now visible. From the fact that in old deeds the "Ancient Stansted" is referred to, and that *Stansted Heath* is in the adjoining parish of Caterham, the inference is reasonable, notwithstanding the obliteration of the landmarks. The discovery of the remains of a Roman villa in the valley south of Chaldon corroborates this opinion.

The Covert family, whose ancestor came to England with William the Conqueror, appears to have originally held the larger part of the manor, comprising nearly the whole of the parish: it was subsequently divided and sold to various persons; among whom were John Elmebrigg of Merstham, the prior and canons of Merton, and Sir Thomas Cawarden of Blechingley. The present proprietors are Lord Hylton, Sir William Clayton, and Mr. Hewitson.

The parish register, which commences A.D. 1564, does not, however, contain the name of one of the early occupants of the land.

The church, under forty feet in length, consists of nave, chancel, and two aisles; a chapel on the south of the chancel, and a south porch. It is probable that originally a nave and chancel only constituted the whole church; and from the early character of

the small window in the gable of the west wall, this may be a part of that structure; that the aisles were added about the end of the twelfth century, and that when these additions were made, the painting on the west wall was executed. The foundations of what appeared to be outer walls were discovered, extending between the arches of the south aisle, beneath the pavement, during the repairs. The chapel is somewhat later. Some of the windows in the north and south walls are Early English in style; others belong to the Decorated period; but most of those now existing are modern insertions. The tower and spire are modern, as in 1808 "there were neither tower or spire."*

There is some anomaly about its dedication. In the inventory† of church goods taken in the reign of King Edward VI., anno 1552, it is styled Saint Peter, Chaldon. By the will of Isabel,‡ widow of Baldwin Covert, dated September 8th, 1440, her body was ordered "to be buried in the church of *St. Peter and St. Paul*, Chalvedon, next the tomb of her husband." In the inventory before mentioned is "Item ii belles in the steple." There is now but one bell, having on it the inscription "*Ca~pana beati Pauli*," but the floor is pierced for two bells. In some churchwardens' accounts in the parish chest, dated 1782, one bell only is named. In all modern writings it is called Saint Paul. From this it may be inferred that the church was dedicated to St. Peter and St. Paul, and that there were originally two bells, one of which disappeared at some time between 1552 and 1782.

The preservation of this painting, which is 17 ft. 2 in. in length and 11 ft. 2 in. in height, is entirely due to the care of the late Rector, the Rev. H. Shepherd, who, instead of leaving, as is too commonly the case, everything to the architect and his clerk of the

* Manning and Bray, vol. ii., p. 444.

† J. R. Daniel-Tyssen, Esq., F.S.A., in *Surrey Collections*, vol. iv., pp. 62 and 149.

‡ Brayley's *History of Surrey*, vol. iv., p. 33.

works, kept a watchful eye upon the proceedings, and catching sight of some colour peeping out beneath the whitewash, warned those employed in removing the latter, and thus preserved the painting from being destroyed, a fate that perhaps would otherwise have befallen it. Under the auspices and at the cost of the SURREY ARCHÆOLOGICAL SOCIETY it was rendered yet more distinct, and the reward for these labours has been the recovery of the most complete, as well as the most interesting example of ecclesiastical art that has come down to us. As far as the researches of the writer go, the subject is unique, never having been previously discovered in England; nor is such a discovery recorded in France, as it certainly would have been by the indefatigable editor of the "*Annales Archæologiques*."

The subject of the painting which is on the western wall of the nave of Chaldon Church may be called the "Ladder of the Salvation of the Human Soul, and the Road to Heaven," such being the title given to it in the "Guide to Painting of the Greek Church," in which ancient formulæ are preserved for the use of the present time, rendering it thereby a valuable manual of reference for all who study mediæval art.* In the Greek Church nothing changes, and its art in the present day is, in its traditions, that of the twelfth century.

The "Ladder" is a metaphor, and a very natural one. The vision of Jacob is the first on record. But the expression often occurs. In the "*Sequentiæ*" of St. Gregory "*Scala Cœli*" is applied to the wood of the cross.† It is here used poetically. But we have

* This volume is a translation into French from a manuscript in modern Greek, used by the monk-painters of the monasteries of Mount Athos, published and edited by M. Didron. Paris, 1844.

† Mediæval writers considered the vision of Jacob to be a prefigure of the cross of Christ as the road to heaven. *Vide* "*Sermo de Exaltatione Sanctæ Crucis*," among the collection entitled "*Dormi securè*."

the record of a vision in the life of St. Perpetua, given by Petrus de Natalibus,* in which the ladder to heaven is introduced. This lady was martyred under Valerian and Gallienus, and whilst danger of death was imminent had the following dream:—"She saw a golden ladder† erected up to heaven, on the right and left of which were placed knives and swords, so full and close, that no one, unless very small, could ascend by it between the swords. Beneath it lay a horrible and huge dragon, which threatened all those wishing to ascend. And she saw Satyrus‡ ascending above by it, and exhorting his companions, even as he ascended, that they should not fear the dragon." This prefigured her martyrdom and the joys of heaven, to which it was the ladder or road.

The following is among the formulæ of the Greek Guide above referred to:—

**"THE LADDER OF THE SALVATION OF THE SOUL AND
THE ROAD TO HEAVEN.**

"A monastery. Outside the gate a crowd of monks, young and old. In front, a very great and very high ladder, going up to heaven. Monks are above; some about to mount, others seizing the base of the ladder, in order to get up higher. Above them, winged angels seem to aid them. On high in heaven, Christ. Before him, on the last rung of the ladder, an old monk; like to a priest, he extends his hands and beholds heaven. The Lord takes him by one hand; with the other he places upon his head a crown of flowers, saying to him: 'Come to me all ye that are weary and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' Beneath the ladder, a great number of winged demons seize monks by the dress. They pull some, but cannot make them fall; as to others, they have

* *Catalogus Sanctorum*.

† So also in *Paradise Lost*, book iii., l. 541:—

"That scal'd by steps of gold to heaven's gate."

‡ Satyrus was one of her companions in martyrdom.

succeeded in distancing them a little from the ladder (the monks themselves seize hold of the ladder, some with a single hand, others with both hands). At length other monks are quite detached from the ladder, and the demons take them by the middle of the body to bear them away. Beneath them, all-devouring hell, under the form of an enormous and terrible dragon, holding in his throat a monk fallen in headlong, and of whom one only sees the feet. Write this inscription:—‘Behold the ladder rested against heaven, and reflect well on the foundations of virtue. What rapidity characterizes this fragile life. Approach the ladder and ascend with courage. You have for defenders the choir of angels; you will pass through the snares of bad demons. Arrived at the gates of heaven, you will obtain the crown from the hands of the Lord.’”

Now let us contrast this description with another of the twelfth century. In the public library of Strasburg was preserved* a valuable manuscript, entitled “*Hortus Deliciarum*,” its date 1160, and it was full of miniatures, which, according to M. Didron, had a great relation to Byzantine art. Here was one of those moralizing ladders, accompanied by an explanatory text, as under:—

“A large ladder is set up and elevated from the earth to heaven. On high, at the last step, the hand of God issues from the clouds, and holds the crown of life to those who ascend without letting themselves fall. Below, at the first step, the devil, under the form of a dragon, set snares for those who wish to climb the ladder.

“Two demons draw the bow against those who get up; but two angels, armed with sword and buckler,

* The destruction of this library in the siege of Strasburg, 1870, is in itself a protest against the barbarity of unnecessary warfare. This volume, so often quoted by M. Didron, was one of the most valuable records of art in the twelfth century; all the more valuable that its author was known, and for the preservation of an authenticated date.

parry the arrows, and prevent the demons from piercing those who wish to ascend.

“At first, on the second step, one sees a soldier and a laywoman. The soldier has tumbled down; he falls upon horses and bucklers, in which he delighted. The woman of the world is thrown down also upon the towns and objects of luxury which she desired.

“At the third and fourth steps, a young priest and a nun. The priest offers money to the nun, who takes it, and who draws the priest with her towards precious vestments and impure cities.

“At the fourth step, a clerk has tumbled down upon a table loaded with meat and drink. A young woman (*amica clerici*), clothed in white, calls the clerk, who consents to go.

“At the seventh, a monk, purse at the neck, falls upon a mass of coined money, a treasure.

“At the tenth, a recluse (*inclusus*) falls down upon a bed, where he reposes through idleness and pleasure.

“At the twelfth, a hermit, a bearded old man, lets himself go, falling towards his garden, in which he delighted, which he has loved too much, where he was better pleased to plant than to meditate and pray.

“At the thirteenth step one sees Virtue (*Virtus, id est caritas*), a young woman with long fair hair, head bare, who advances to take the crown which God reaches towards her.”

On one of the ascenders of the ladder one reads:—

“All these, perilously falling from above, can the Lord, by the medicine of penitence, restore to the true height of virtue.”

On another:—“Seven are the steps by which one ascends to the kingdom of heaven: chastity, contempt of the world, humility, obedience, faith, charity from a pure heart.”*

* “Hos omnes periculosè ab alto cadentes potest Dominus medicinâ penitentiae verum ad virtutum culmen restituere.”

“Septem sunt scalæ quibus ascenditur ad regnum cœlorum: castitas, mundi contemptio, humilitas, obedientia, fides, caritas de puro corde.”

The author of the "*Hortus Deliciarum*" was Herrade, Abbess of St. Odile, Alsace, and the work was written for the instruction of the monastery, as indeed was the Greek "Guide." The two descriptions may fitly be compared one with another, where they agree, and wherein they differ. Both must cede altogether in interest and fulness of incident to the painting at Chaldon, addressed to the sight and understanding of the inhabitants of a small and obscure parish, even now quite secluded from the busy world, but which, in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, must have been a wild district in the midst of chalk downs, full, nevertheless, of that beauty which so often attends such a geological formation. The rural seclusion of the neighbourhood is indeed, even now, quite charming.

Before we enter particularly into the subjects which are combined in the painting at Chaldon, it must be noted that, in a Greek MS. preserved in the Vatican, No. 394, the works of St. John Climacus, and of the twelfth century, there are several miniatures* in which the "ladder" is introduced, illustrating a treatise so called where the grades are so many steps to ascend to virtue. This also applies directly to the monastery; but, apart from the fact of the embodiment of the metaphor of the "ladder," it does not illustrate our subject in its details: to do this we must go to mediæval literature, and here we shall find some very curious analogies.†

The painting is divided into two parts by a horizontal band, which, using heraldic language, is "nebuly;" it, in fact, represents clouds, according to the convention common in mediæval art. The lower part is devoted to the torments of the damned, the upper to the salvation of souls. In the centre, rising from the base, is a ladder, at the apex of which, within an aureole having a wavy outline, is the demi-figure of Christ in the act of benediction, the sun on

* Engraved in Agincourt, "*Histoire de l'Art par les Monumens.*"

† The figure of "grades," or steps, is often used by mediæval monastic writers in their moralizations.

his right, and moon on his left. This represents paradise or heaven. In the upper division figures on the ladder are ascending in various attitudes. In the lower division they are falling or struggling to ascend, and here and there cling with desperation to it.

We will now consider the lower division, and at the north corner, that opposite to the spectator's right hand, is a tree of conventional design, in the upper part of which a serpent is entwined. On the wall of the north respond of the arcade of the nave were the remains of a large figure—that of a demon, unhappily destroyed during the Rector's absence. But here we have clearly indicated the subject of the "Fall of Man." The tree is the "Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil;" its significance is manifest, and its bearing upon the general subject exceedingly interesting. It, in fact, points out the foundation of the story delineated. By man's fall comes punishment, but there is also mercy and redemption. All this the painting is intended to teach, and the story commences here.

Midway between the tree and the ladder is a figure seated amid flames. It has no eyes, but around its neck hangs a money-bag; three money-bags hang round the waist; in the right hand it holds a coin, and pieces of coin are falling from the mouth, out of which lolls its tongue. This figure symbolizes "Usury," a vice so constantly exclaimed against in the Middle Ages, and the subject of a vast number of legendary tales of the punishments inflicted upon the usurer in the infernal regions. (See Fig. 1, page 12.)

In the "Promptuarium Exemplorum" of John Herolt the Dominican* we get in three stories

* John Herolt was a German monk of the Dominican order, who wrote at the beginning of the fifteenth century. He calls his series of "Sermones de Tempore et de Sanctis," etc., the "Sermones Discipuli." His "Promptuarium Exemplorum" is a compilation of various stories illustrative of religious teaching as then understood. (Moréri, *Dictionnaire Historique*.)

Peter Cæsarius, who will be often quoted, was a monk of the Cistercian order, of the monastery of Heisterbach, in 1199, the ruins of which are still to be seen near the Drachenfels, among the

materials which seem to have been combined together to compose the design of this figure. The word "usurer" in the Middle Ages embraced a large class. It was not only the man who lent money at a high and ruinous rate of interest, but an avaricious, or even a miserly person, came under the same category. This is abundantly shewn in many stories about them, both in the author referred to as well as in others.



Fig. 1

In "Exemplum XLV." we have the story of a Knight of Cologne, a usurer, who, being very ill, was moving teeth and mouth, when his servants said to him, "What are you eating, my lord?" He answered, "I am eating money." It had seemed to him that demons had poured money into his mouth.*

At "Exemplum XLVI." a usurer of Brabant, who had greatly spoiled the poor, saw at his death two

Seven mountains which commence the Rhine scenery. He afterwards became prior of Villers in Brabant, and died about 1240. His work "Dialogus Miraculorum" is a conversation between a novice and a monk on religion, in which the latter relates numerous tales in illustration. (*Biographie Universelle*.)

* See also Cæsarius, from whom it is probably copied, in his "Dialogus Miraculorum—de Morientibus," cap. xlii. He names the knight "Theodoric."

large *dogs* of darkness about his bed; he then "thrust out his tongue to about a *foot* in length, and thus miserably died."* "Exemplum XLVII." is a story of two sisters who, at their mother's death, divided their patrimony. One put out her portion to usury, and cared not for her poor sister, but, making a chest, collected her money in it. At length she fell ill, and, feeling herself at the point of death, went to her chest, and taking two bags of money from it, bound them about her naked body, concealed beneath her clothes. She then bade her sister, that no one should examine her body after her death. But suspicion having arisen from its weight, a horrible disclosure took place, and it was found that there was a huge serpent, who frequently spat fire and sulphur into the woman's mouth. The flames amid which the figure sits represent the "fiery seat" prepared for the usurer. Cæsarius gives us a story of one Godescalc, a usurer, who was taken by a demon to hell, and saw there a fiery seat (*igneæ sedes*) prepared for him. ("De Contritione," cap. vii.)

Now these stories are apt illustrations. We have the money dropping or being vomited from the mouth. We have the lolled-out tongue, and bags of money about the waist and neck. And it must be mentioned that, in the original, the term used for "bag" is "*crumena*," translated as "a leathern bag worn about the neck;" and one bag *is* about the neck of the usurer, and he sits amid flames.† Perhaps the want of eyes may be a hint, taken from another story of a usurer related by Cæsarius. The Novice asks of the Monk how he, who had no eyes, could have contrition, as *without eyes* he could not weep. The Monk answers, "Contrition is not in tears, but in the moving of the heart."

* The "dogs of darkness" are doubtless the two demons vaulting above with pitchforks making a fulcrum of his head.

† In the "*Hortus Deliciarum*," the money-loving monk has his "bag" about his neck. (*Vide ante*, p. 9.)

There is yet another story which may be added to these in illustration of this figure, as it explains the holding out the coin in his right hand, and catching in his left those that fall from his mouth. This is in the Chronicle of Matthew Paris,* recorded in the vision of the monk of Evesham, a vision of Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise, said to have occurred in 1196. Here a goldsmith (of course a usurer in a monk's eyes) is tormented on account of frauds committed in life. He is frequently, as he says, thrown down upon a heap of burning coin, and compelled to devour in his mouth ignited coins, which burn all his bowels. Oftentimes he is compelled to count them, by which his fingers and hands are terribly burnt. Not only does this illustrate the uplifted coin, but also those dropping from the mouth, as in the story of Cæsarius. The artist has thus symbolized the Usurer and his punishment in after-life. If we trust to the numerous stories of a similar kind which abound in all collections of the monkish moralities, no person was more hated. Shakespeare's play of the Merchant of Venice was partly founded upon one of these tales, and among the numerous characters satirized by Dante and placed in the infernal regions, the usurers (*mesta gente*) are conspicuous, and the poet indicates individuals by arms on the bag hanging about the neck.

"Cosi ancor su per la strema testa
Di qual settimo cerchio tutto solo
Andai ove sedea *la gente mesta*

* * * * *

Non ne connobbi alcun ; ma io m' accorsi
Che dal collo a ciascun pendea una tasca
Che avea certo colore e certo segno."

Inferno, c. 17.

On the left hand of the usurer is a group of two figures, male and female, embracing, and a small red demon with arms enclosing both. That this is intended to symbolize illicit affections of some kind,

* Also in Roger of Wendover, but in both abridged. The "Revelation" in English has been well edited by Mr. Arber in his excellent reprints.

cannot be doubted, but it wants other indications than we possess to specialize it. Possibly the very colour given to the fiend in this case might give the clue.* But on the other side we get another pair, also with a small attendant demon, this being of a light colour. One of the figures has the hair made up in rude masses of locks, which we see repeated in other places where the intent cannot be doubtful. It is only used in some of the male figures, and here, possibly, denotes a youth. These attendant demons of smaller size, from the manner in which they are placed, shew them to be intended as spirits of temptation to evil. This leads us to consider the ancient doctrine of a good and a bad spirit attendant upon man, which early found its way into Christianity. In fact it is given by one of those writers who immediately succeeded the Apostles in the first century of our era. The second book of "The Shepherd of Hermas," called "His Commands," Command VI., enters into this subject fully. It tells us: "There are two angels with man—one of righteousness, the other of iniquity. . . . The angel of righteousness is mild, and modest, and gentle, and quiet. When, therefore, he gets into thy heart he talks with thee of righteousness, of modesty, of chastity, of bountifulness, of forgiveness, of charity, and piety. When all these things come into thy heart, know then that the angel of righteousness is with thee. . . . Learn also the works of the angel of iniquity. He is first of all bitter, and angry, and foolish; and his works are pernicious, and overthrow the servants of God. When, therefore, these things come into thy heart, thou shalt know by his works that this is the angel of iniquity. . . . When anger overtakes thee or bitterness, know that he is in thee. As also when the desire of many things, and of the best meats, and of drunkenness,

* "Rubigo culpæ" is a frequent expression. Rubigo, "rust or foulness," has its root in the term for *red*.

when the love of what belongs to others, pride, and much speaking, and ambition, and the like things come upon thee. When, therefore, these things come into thy heart, know that the angel of iniquity is with thee." In both these groups, then, we must consider the smaller figures of demons as the "angel of iniquity" prompting to sin, just as Milton has used the same idea in the tempting of Eve.* It is very difficult with our present knowledge to explain them exactly; but if we turn to the description given in the "*Hortus Deliciarum*" we get a key, in some measure, to the spirit which guided the treatment. There we find coupled together the clerk and his concubine, the priest and the nun, and we can only surmise that we have here a similar story attempted to be conveyed, though not perhaps precisely specialized in the same manner. The monkish moralists, in enlarging upon the sin of "*Luxuria*," point out the evil of youthful seductions by adornment of the person, and the sin of more mature age, also by allurements of various kinds.† One of the two male figures is evidently intended for a youth, and the other, whose profile is given, for one in mature manhood. The sin exemplified in both cases is evidently the same, and communicated at the suggestion of the bad angel or demon.

But the most interesting and original part of the whole is the bridge of spikes. Two large demons, one by the "*Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil*," another by the Ladder, the first painted yellow, the other a light colour, hold between them a beam with serrated points—a bridge of spikes—over which we see several souls progressing, or attempting to do so.

This punishment of the "bridge" is of very reverend antiquity, going far back into the recesses of Eastern fable; and when we get there, we are lost and bewildered in our research. To pursue it, is to

* *Paradise Lost*.

† See Herolt's sermon "*De Sancta Margareta*."

follow an *ignis fatuus* ever leading us on, but only into deeper mire and to further gloom. Let us content ourselves with noting the fact, and giving instances best for our purpose. In the Koran we find, as in most works of a cognate character, not the creation of one man's brain, but a compilation, in which are collected floating ideas of various kinds and of various origin. So, when we are told of the bridge over Gehenna, as narrow and as sharp as a razor, we may be sure it was not an original invention, but one that had long been entertained in the imaginative mind of Eastern peoples. In all the stories of the punishment of departed souls a bridge of some kind or other is found, and the tradition has travelled into Northern legends. Although variously described, there yet remains that one fact of agreement. But, for our purpose, we must note those stories which directly illustrate our subject.

First, however, we must describe this portion of the picture. The souls which are attempting the passage of the bridge of spikes are—first, one who has not yet quite mounted upon it, holding in both hands a basin, probably containing some fluid, as he holds it anxiously, as if afraid of spilling its contents. He as well as one or two others on the bridge have their features defined, an exception to the rule: they are in profile, and are really expressive. The two next figures face each other, proceeding in contrary directions, and unfortunately a portion of the painting is here effaced, and we cannot tell what they were carrying. Both are females, and the third holds in the right hand what is most likely to be a ball of spun wool. The fourth is holding a kind of hammer, or a mason's pick: the attitude of his left arm is peculiar, and may be caused by apprehension of evil from the coming figure. The fifth, and last, advancing towards him in the contrary direction, is apparently a smith, who carries a horseshoe by a pair of pincers, and, with hammer in his upraised right hand, appears in the act of forging—a difficult task indeed without

an anvil and upon the narrow bridge; and an unpleasant person for one coming in an opposite direction to meet. What are the crimes for which these souls are thus punished? It would not be easy to surmise, but we will now see what analogies bear upon the subject. (See Fig. 2.)

The vision of Tundale comes aptly for our purpose, the more so as its date, 1149, does not antecede many years the probable date of the Chaldon painting. Tundale was an Irishman of noble rank, who died suddenly in a fit of rage, and was conducted by his guardian angel through Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise, an office Virgil performs for Dante in the "Divina Commedia." It was exceedingly popular; for, besides being often produced in the Latin, it has also many versions in most of the European languages. Tundale, in his progress, comes to a bridge, which, in the English metrical version, is thus described :*

"Over that lake then say thei lygge
A wonder long narow brygge,
Too myle of leynthe that was semand,
And scarsly of the bred of a hand.
Off scharpe pykys of yron and stell
Hit was grevows for to fele.
Ther myght passe by that brygge thare,
But yeff her feet wer hyrt sare.
The hydous bestys in that lake
Drew near the brygge her pray to take
Off sowllows that fell of that brygge don
To swolow hem thei wer ay bon."

He then proceeds to say :—

"He saw won stond on the brygge,
With a burden of corne on is rygge,
Gretand with a dylfull crye,
And pleynud his synne full pytuysly;
The pykys his fett pykud full sore,
He dredyd the bestys mykyll mor."

* An edition of this was published by Mr. Turnbull from a MS. in the Advocates' Library, Edinburgh. 8vo, Edinburgh, 1843.

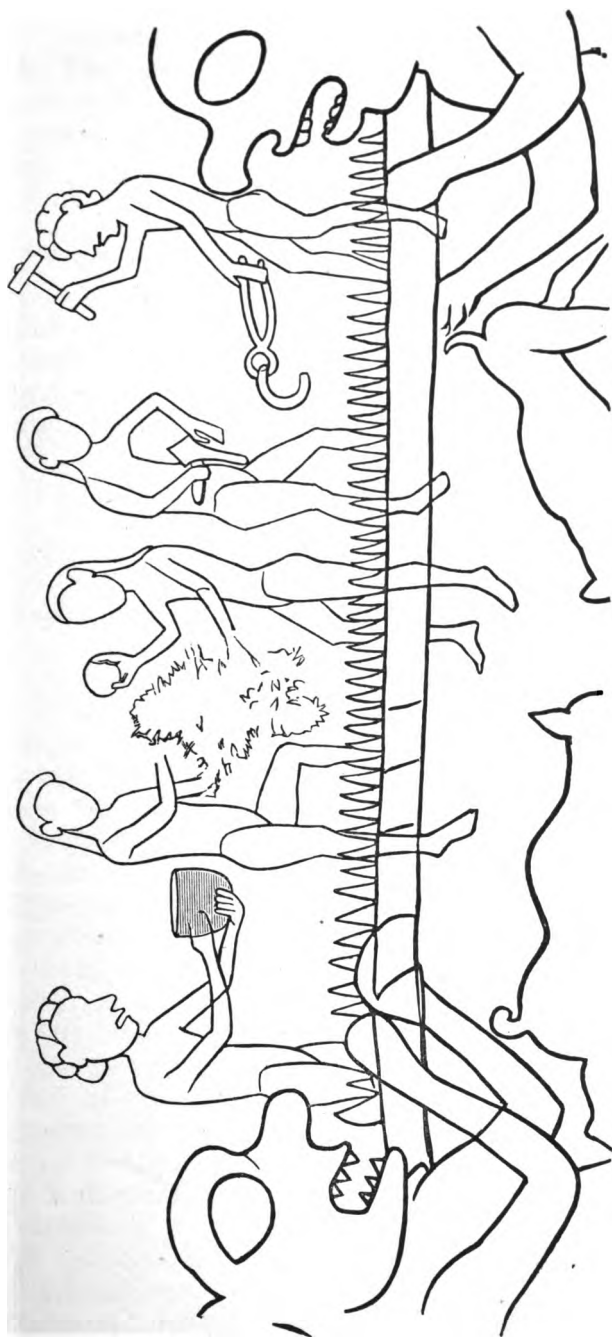


Fig. 2.

He then inquires of the angel the meaning of this:—

“The angell onswerud thus agayn :
For hym is ordeynyd this payn,
That robbyght men of hor ryches,
Or any gudys that herys is.

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And he that thou syst on the brygge stand
With the schevis so sore gretand,
Fro holy chyrch he hom stale.”

Then the angel tells Tundale he must now go over the bridge.

“And with the lede a wyld cowe,
Loke thou lede her warly,
And be war yee fall not by.”

This punishment is enjoined because in his life he had stolen the “gossypis cow.” Poor Tundale is in great trouble; he takes the cow by the horns, but finds it very difficult to get her over the bridge: both tumble about, until at length he meets the other unfortunate carrying the sheaf, and the bridge is too narrow for them to pass; neither could turn back, and they suffered sorely. But the angel comes to the rescue, and Tundale is saved.

Now, we here get some good hints for the comprehension of this part of the design. It mentions particularly that those who robbed from “holy chyrch,” as well as from others, were thus punished. They were obliged to carry over their ill-gotten goods. In the painting we probably have represented a number of culprits against “holy church,” or other dishonesty, specialized by the emblems of their trades. Here is the blacksmith, condemned, as it seems, to forge a horseshoe without anvil, upon the passage of the bridge.

The suggestion, however, for this treatment may have arisen from a story in the “*Liber de proprietatibus Apum*,” which speaks of a knight who often

employed a smith in his vicinity to shoe his horses and those of his friends. The smith fell ill, and the costs due to him were forgotten. Thirty years afterwards the knight dies and appears on a certain day to his faithful servant, carrying in his hands red-hot horseshoes (*flammantia ferramenta equorum*), saying, "Tell my wife to pay that man his debt through which I am thus troubled."* Thus then it would not be the smith, but the one who owed him money, who was the culprit, and is thus symbolized.

The next figure may be a mason, as the instrument he carries is like a mason's pick. The next group have the emblems they are carrying defaced; but, as they are females, one may be holding a ball of spun wool, *the clew*, and may represent a dishonest *spinster*, using that term in its primitive meaning. In Vives' "Instruction for a Christian Woman" is the following illustrative passage: "What a foule thing is it to see a woman instead of hir wool-basket to handle the table-board, and for hir spindle, the dice; for hir *clewe* or prayer-book, to turn the cards." He, ascending the bridge, with the bowl between both hands, is, most probably, one who had stolen a tithe of milk,† for the bowl is painted yellow, with a white inside, which evidently is to represent the fluid it contains, and which he must carry over without spilling. It must be noted that in the painting, as in the vision of Tundale, the souls are crossing the bridge in opposite directions. In all such works as these we must look for a very *objective* treatment, addressed as they were to the eyes, and through them

* "Speculum Exemplorum Dist.," v., c. 123. Hagenau, 1512.

† Mediaeval writers are particularly severe against those who did not duly pay tithes. They do not scruple to call them "thieves." Herolt, in his sermon on the Feast of St. James the Apostle, quotes St. Augustine thus: "Decime ex debito requiruntur, et qui eas dare nolunt *aliena* invadunt. Et quod pejus est, sacrilegium committunt subtrahendo ecclesiarum decimas sibi de jure debitas." Also St. Jerome: "Et allegatus in decretis, xii. 9 ii., amico recipere aliquid *furtum* est." There is also this *adage*: "Hoc tollit ipse fiscus, quod non tollit Christus."

to reach the mind. To expect anything deep or mysterious is quite out of the question. Ideas that were commonly taught, and well known at the time, would be sure to be given in the most direct and simplest manner.

The symbol of the bridge, as a punishment, is undoubtedly of the greatest antiquity, and has had a remarkable persistence. The stories illustrating it are very numerous, but the idea must have had a common origin. It is sometimes a narrow bridge, no broader than a thread or a hair, and as sharp as a scymetar or razor, or as smooth as glass, or with sharp spikes. It is found in the religious system of Zoroaster, and perhaps this is the earliest tradition of its use known to us; but we must assuredly look still further back to seek for its origin. That it was widely spread over the East is certain, and that it has kept its place there down to our own times will be seen in the following notice, given by a correspondent of the *Times* writing from Wuchang, China, Dec. 14, 1872. He speaks of a representation of Hell, in a temple, thus: "Here is a bridge of El Sirât, over which wretched ghosts are being urged by green demons, who evidently find sport in the occupation, knowing that the victims cannot cross but will inevitably fall over among the serpents, which are stretching their necks up greedily from below." How long it lasted in our own country, surviving the storms of time with all its revolutions, may be seen in a tradition which remained in Yorkshire down to 1624, that a person after death must pass over Whinney Moor. So, at a funeral it was the custom for a woman to come and chant over the corpse some verses, from which the following are taken:—

"When thou from hence doest pass away,
Every night and awle,
To Whinney Moor thou com'st at last,
And Christ receive thy sawle.

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From Whinney Moor that thou mayest pass,
 Every night and awle,
 To Brig of dread thou com'st at last,
 And Christ receive thy sawle.
 From *Brig of dread, na brader than a thread*,
 Every night and awle,
 To Purgatory fire thou com'st at last,
 And Christ receive thy sawle."

Let us now consider the groups on the other side of the ladder. Conspicuous here is the large caldron full of flames, and filled with souls, which two demons, one on each side, are stirring up with forks, and beneath it a fire. This is the punishment, according to the authority of Tundale's vision, of parricides and fratricides.* That demon which stands on the spectator's left of the caldron, is stretching out the right hand to clutch more unfortunate souls; but here the painting is a little defaced and obscure. Beneath this arm are several souls, whose feet are being tormented, and gnawed at, by a demon wolf lying upon its back, and flames beneath. It is probable that these represent dancers, as one of the stories in the "Promptuarium," under the title "Chorea," speaks of this crime and its punishment; for those guilty of dancing (not an uncommon offence) came under the lash of the monkish satirist.† "Exemplum IX." tells

* This crime may be considered as the result of the sin of "anger," one of the "seven deadly sins." An adage often quoted, "Ira est ignis," is significant, and points to the just punishment of anger by fire.

† The heads of some stories out of Herolt's "Promptuarium Exemplorum" will illustrate the manner in which "dancing" was regarded:—

"Christus a chorisantibus per maxime vituperatur"—c. vii.

"In chorea committuntur quasi omnia peccata mortalia"—c. viii.

"Chorisantes graviter puniuntur in futuro"—c. ix.

"Puella quædam fuit ex usta in toto corpore propter choream"

—c. x.

"Mulier chorizans a ludentibus cum baculo necata est"—c. xii.

In a story, in the book called "Scala Celi," is this passage, which closely illustrates the painting: "Vinculatio pedum subter ventrem draconis est propter chorizationes," etc.

of a young monk who entered into St. Patrick's Purgatory and found there various punishments of souls. And he saw an iron circle crowded with the sharpest iron nails, on which many danced, surrounded with a continuous sulphurous fire, whose bowels even demons gnawed, and a wolf devoured their arms even to the bones. There is also a story of a virgin in the dance who was caught up in a whirlwind by demons and flagellated even unto death.

These evidently bear upon the subject, though all the details are not given in the painting, but the traces of a figure falling, and remains of a demon in the upper part, may easily refer to the virgin "caught up in a whirlwind;" and the "wolf" in the other and the "sulphurous fire" is sufficiently suggestive.

The demon on the opposite side of the caldron has his left paw upon the head of a figure close by it, holding a bottle of wine in shape like our present champagne bottles.* Beneath the bottle are traces of a pilgrim's staff, with something hanging from it, perhaps a purse, as this is often seen appended in ancient representations of the pilgrims, and was for the purpose of collecting alms. (See Fig. 3.) Now this figure was at first naturally a puzzle. That the sin of drunkenness was intended was clear, but why the introduction of the pilgrim's staff? A story from our friend the Dominican comes in aptly to aid us. It is found in "Exemplum II.," under the head "Ebrietas." The original story of The Drunken Pilgrim is first given by Cæsarius, and this is



Fig. 3.

* This is a curious fact; most archæologists would certainly have given a much less antiquity to the champagne bottle.

really but a dream. It is entitled "The Punishment of the Abbot of Corbey," and runs thus:—

At the time of the schism between Otto and Philip, kings of the Romans, a certain pilgrim coming from parts beyond sea, selling his cloak for wine, which in those parts is very strong, drank so much that, being drunk, he went out of his mind, and was thought to be dead. At the same hour his spirit was led to the place of punishment, where he saw the Prince of Darkness himself, sitting upon a well covered with a fiery lid. In the meantime, amongst other souls, is led forth the Abbot of Corbey, whom he much saluted as he presented to him a sulphurous drink in a red-hot chalice, who, when he had drunken, the lid being removed, was sent into the well. But the pilgrim, as he stood before the infernal threshold, and seeing such things, trembled, the Devil loudly calling out, "Bring over to me that lord who stands outside, who of late, selling his garment of pilgrimage, got drunk." On hearing which the pilgrim, turning to the Angel of the Lord who had led him thither, promised that he would never more get drunk, since now at that hour he delivered him from imminent peril, who, presently returning to himself, noted the day and hour, and, returning to his country, knew that the aforesaid abbot had died at the same time. "I saw," says Cæsarius, "the same abbot at Cologne, and he was a very secular man, more conformable to a soldier than a monk."

Now, we see by this that Cæsarius speaks of it as a fact, not mincing even the mention of names, a very common circumstance with him; and a drunken man having a hideous dream has nothing very improbable about it. The schism between Otto and Philip lay between the years 1197-8, which will be important when we come to consider the date of the picture.

But it may be well to say something of the status of a pilgrim in the Middle Ages, so that we may better understand his crime in parting with his distinguishing mantle (*esclavinia*). A pilgrim, properly

so called, was one who went to a distant shrine beyond sea, and the more especially to that of Compostella, the sepulchre of St. James in Galicia, because it was further from his country than that of any other Apostle.* And it was a received opinion in the Peninsula that you must at one time make a pilgrimage thither, if not in body during life, then in spirit after death, and to those performing this good work the Milky Way was said to be a guide by night, pointing, as it were in its starry course, the road to heaven.† To this shrine the escallop shell was the special badge, though afterwards applied generally to all pilgrims, and so is identified in the popular ballad. Much respect was attached to the person of a pilgrim. Before setting out on his journey he confessed himself, made his will, and his bourdon or staff and wallet received a solemn benediction from the priest. It will therefore be seen that one who parted with his especial costume was really abandoning his sacred vow.

On the other side of the demon is the figure of a soul at whose uplifted right arm a large dog appears to be gnawing. This receives illustration also from the Dominican Herolt in the "*Sermones Discipuli—de Tempore*," subject, "*De Penis Inferni*," CXXV. Here is a very elaborate picture of the torments undergone by a lady for her various sins in life. The artist of the Chaldon picture has, fortunately for himself, been content with a part only of the exuberant details, by which his task has been simplified. Amongst these torments were dogs, who devoured her hands; the reason being, as she tells us, that in life "I stretched out my hands, in giving to dogs those things which I ought to have given to the poor, that is to say, meat, cakes, and other things; and even I adorned them luxuriously with rings and gems." The subject is here sufficiently clear. The demon on

* Dante, "*Vita Nuova*," Fir. 1576, p. 69.

† V. Bartholme, "*Pereira Paciecidos*," lib. vii., p. 117.

this side of the ladder seems to be employed in preventing, by cries and gestures, the souls from safely ascending, and has carried off one with the fork over his shoulder. Just beneath are two figures, conspicuously male and female, tumbling down backwards together, holding a horn between them.

At first sight this might appear to have an allusion to hunting. But the objections to this view are many. The horn is not quite of the shape of the hunting-horn, but is like that of the warder; then it is too large in proportion to the figures. If this were intended to specialize a hunter, it would certainly be of proportions accordingly, and probably suspended to the figure by a strap. We must therefore look in another direction for a solution of this part of our composition. The female is clearly offering money, not receiving it. Might it imply one in trust betraying that by female seduction? The way in which the woman lays one hand upon the horn, and offers money with the other, seems to shew it is to get possession of it. Horns represented tenures, as that of Ulphus at York. May it not symbolize some betrayal of trust, or surrender of property of the church? It is a vague surmise, but it is the best I can offer.*

Other figures of souls falling down from above are seen in this part of the subject, but which must be again alluded to in the description of the upper division. This does not entail upon us much difficulty, as here we have ideas introduced that are well known. But the way in which they are combined together is exceedingly interesting; and although some part is defaced, yet the losses are so trifling, that it leaves nothing to be guessed at. Practically the whole composition is complete.

Immediately over the "Tree of Knowledge" is that well-known subject "The Descent into Hell,"

* The suggestion given in the account in the Collections of the Surrey Archaeological Society is, I fear, still less satisfactory.

called by our old writers "The Harrowing of Hell." Now, the earliest authority for this is found in the apocryphal Gospel of Nicodemus, a work ascribed to the third century. It is best therefore, in illustration, to go there in preference to numerous other sources, which are but reproductions. But, before we enter into the narrative, it may be well to set forth the theology of the Middle Ages upon this article of the Creed, as given in the "Sermones Discipuli—de Tempore, CXLVI."

This article of faith, "He descended into Hell," was propounded by St. Philip. As soon as the soul of Christ was separated from the body it descended to the Limbo of the Patriarchs, and remained there from the hour of his death until the hour of his resurrection, when he led forth the Patriarchs from Limbo, and on the day of his Ascension produced their souls in heaven. At the time of Christ's Passion there were four receptacles of souls. The first receptacle was the Hell of the Damned, and to this Christ did not descend, neither did he liberate any souls therefrom. The second receptacle is the Limbo of Children who had departed in original sin. And there is that punishment of the damned in the want of the divine vision, but no sensible pain. This limbo is above Hell, and to this Christ did not descend. The third receptacle is Purgatory, which is above the Limbo of Children, where there is corporeal fire, in which souls are punished who in their lives have not fulfilled satisfactory penance. Out of this Christ liberated those souls who had been sufficiently purged of sin. The fourth receptacle, and the highest, is the Limbo of the Holy Patriarchs, where is no vision of God, nor sensible pain. Into this Christ descended, and broke it, and led forth the Holy Patriarchs. Such then was the doctrine of the Middle Ages on this subject, as set forth by Herolt.

There is a subtlety of distinction here that the artist could not convey, but nevertheless he was influenced in some measure by it, and the position of

the subject above the place of torment is in accord with the theologians. It is necessary to point out that in the Chaldon painting there is more simplicity of treatment than is usually found in later compositions. There are no attendant demons whatever, which here so often play a very conspicuous part.

But we will now briefly narrate the event as given in the Gospel of Nicodemus. The two sons of Simeon, Karinus and Leucius, raised from the dead, commit to paper a narrative in the synagogue at Jerusalem. We need not follow it in its verbose details, nor enter into the quarrel between Satan and the Prince of Hell or Hades respecting the Advent of Christ. The story then proceeds: "Now when we had been laid with all our fathers in the pit, in the gloom of darkness, there suddenly appeared the golden glow of the sun and a purple royal light shining upon us. And immediately the father of all the human race, with all the patriarchs and prophets exulted; saying, This light is the author of eternal light, which has promised to send us the co-eternal light." An altercation then takes place between Satan and Hades, which continues for a long time—in the midst of it "There was suddenly a sound as of thunder, and the crying of spirits, saying, 'Lift up your gates, ye princes; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting gates, and the King of Glory shall come in.'" The patriarchs and prophets then call upon them, the princes of hell, to open the gates. Then the narrative continues: "The Lord of Majesty came in the form of a man, and illumined the eternal darkness. . . . Then the King of Glory, in his majesty spurning Death, and seizing Satan the Prince deprived him of all power, and took our earthly father Adam with him to his glory." The altercation between Hades and Satan continues; and in it we get this allusion to the "forbidden tree," which shews us the influences under which the artist acted in introducing it into this subject. Hades says to Satan: "O prince Satan, possessor of the keys of the Underworld, those thy

riches which thou hast gained by the tree of prevarication* and the loss of Paradise, thou hast now lost by the tree of the cross." "While the Prince of Hell was thus speaking to Satan, the King of Glory said to Hades, 'Satan the Prince shall be under thy power for endless ages, in the place of Adam and his sons, my righteous ones.' And the Lord stretched forth his hand and said, 'Come unto me, all my saints, who have my image and likeness. Ye who have been condemned by the tree, and the devil, and death, now see the devil and death condemned by the tree.' And the Lord took hold of the right hand of Adam and said to him, 'Peace be unto thee with all thy children, my just ones.' Now the Lord held Adam by the hand and gave him over to Michael the Archangel. And all the saints followed Michael the Archangel, and he introduced them all to the glorious grace of Paradise." On their way they meet with Enoch and Elijah, who had not been in Hades, having been translated, and afterwards the penitent thief, who was crucified with Christ: he was carrying his cross, on his way also to Paradise.

Such is the basis of this legend, which, however, was afterwards amplified considerably in details, as was universally the case. The names of the patriarchs liberated, only a few of which are given in this Gospel, are afterwards more particularly mentioned, and are thus enumerated in the "Divina Commedia":—

"Trassene l'ombra del *primo parente*,
D' *Abel* suo figlio, e quella di *Noè*,
Di *Moise* legista e ubbidiente
Abraam patriarca, e *David* rè;
Israel col padre, e con suoi nati,
E con *Rachele*, per cui tanto fè.
Et altri molti; e fecegli beati."

Inferno, canto iv.

Let us now turn to the painting, and see how the foregoing extracts bear upon the design. Hell is

* Forbidden fruit.

represented as the jaw of a monster, the usual convention, which is but the literal rendering of figurative expressions.* Christ is advancing upon the prostrate form of Lucifer or Satan, which is bound about the wrist with manacles. He bears the cross, with banner in his left hand, in sign of victory, and thrusts the point upon Satan's head. This is in accordance with the prophecy, that the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head. In his right he takes Adam by the hand, according to the ancient apocryphal Gospel above quoted. Eve is probably the figure nearest to Christ, and all the souls are represented as joyful for deliverance, and turn towards their deliverer with hands raised in acclamation. The flames depicted in front of the jaw represent Purgatory, and the figures issuing therefrom, those souls which have been saved, according to the doctrine previously stated. In the upper part, the angel issuing from heaven, bearing a scroll, must signify either the messenger with the announcement of the fulfilment of prophecies, or possibly the "sound as of thunder," saying, "Lift up, ye gates," etc. This scroll was never inscribed, as not the least trace of any letter was found upon it; but there can be little doubt of its intent; and numerous extracts of various prophecies supposed to refer to this event are given in this Gospel.†

On either side the ladder stand angels—guards against any ascending without a pass, guides to those fortunate ones who have gone successfully through

* In "Sermo XXX. de Animabus," in the collection "Dormi securè," is this passage: "Et sunt in triplici tribulatione. Primo sunt in ore leonis. Unde David dicit, 'De ore leonis libera me, domine.'"

† I have here used the translation of the Latin Gospel of Nicodemus, translated by B. Harris Cowper (3rd edit., 1870), as one more accurate than that I previously used. But it may be doubtful whether it is not a refinement to speak of the "tree of prevarication," instead of the familiar term "forbidden tree"—the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. "Underworld" is also a new term, and does not convey any ideas more accurate than that familiar to us from mediæval sources.

the preliminary trials. The one on the side we have been describing holds a scroll, also uninscribed. There are yet two figures that belong to this division, whose position gives them significance. These are not ascending on the ladder, in the usual or ordinary way, but at the side, one above the other, that uppermost being, as it were, handed up by the angel. These must be Enoch and Elijah, whom the Gospel of Nicodemus introduces into this subject, as not having been like the rest of the souls in Hell, and not having descended into the grave. And this leads us to interpret the angel on the other side of the ladder, bearing a soul to heaven, as him delegated to convey the penitent thief to Paradise. Thus we are in accord with the apocryphal Gospel, and also with the legendary history of St. Dismas, for so he is called, in which we find it stated, that our Lord gave commandment to an angel to convey him to Paradise.* The frequency of this representation in mediæval compositions of the Crucifixion will be remembered by all who have an acquaintance with the arts of the Middle Ages.†

Pass we now to the other side of the ladder, where also a very important office is being performed. Here is St. Michael weighing souls, another myth, whose history would, if followed, carry us into far antiquity, though it literally is nothing more than rendering metaphor into prose. It is merely making words facts. The usually quoted texts in reference are, Daniel v. 27—"Thou art weighed in the balances and art found wanting;" also, Job xxxi. 6—"Let me be weighed in an even balance, that God may know

* See life of St. Dismas in the "Catalogus Sanctorum," etc., of Petrus de Natalibus.

† One of the most beautiful and interesting of these is by Bonamico Buffalmacco, in the Campo Santo at Pisa. Here the good angel stands upon the cross, having received the soul of the departed thief. But another angel is coming, as if from our dying Lord, to receive it and to bear it to Paradise. The thought is the same as in the Chaldon painting, and derived from the same source.

mine integrity." But it would not be correct to suppose that this idea of "soul-weighing" was merely derived from these texts. It is far more probable that it was handed down from Oriental sources, and that the texts were found apt in illustration. In fact, there were "soul-weighers" in the religious systems of antiquity, notably in that of Egypt; so that there is no difficulty of accounting for its appearance in Christian art. Michael was chief in the Heavenly Host—the conqueror of Satan; the Provost of Paradise, and "Soul-weigher." And this particular incident is one of those which very frequently appear as part of the "Last Judgment," or as a distinct and separate subject. Consequently this, by itself, has often been found in our churches. One instance, discovered at Lenham, Kent, in 1847,* had the story of a usurer, whose bad deeds outweighing his good, when nearly lost was saved by the Virgin Mary, who threw her rosary into the scale, and so rescued the soul from the enraged demon. Recently, in Chesham and Lathbury churches, in Buckinghamshire, and Slapton, Northamptonshire,† other similar examples have been found—it was indeed of very common occurrence; also in Tundale's Vision, St. Michael is introduced as weighing souls at the entrance of Paradise.

The history of the myth of "soul-weighing" is one that takes us far back into that of the human race; or, perhaps, it would be more correct to say, as represented by written records. It teaches this lesson: that, however separated by time, the disruption of empires, the passing away of one religious creed, and the acceptance or progress of another, certain thoughts survive throughout all, only taking other shapes, or rather being clothed in other colours.

It has already been mentioned that in the ancient mythology of Egypt it had a remarkable place, and it

* Engraved in the *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, vol. i., p. 60.

† See *Archæological Journal*.

has left its trace in the fragments of its literature and of its art. In the papyri in the British Museum, now hanging on the walls of the staircase, at the end of the Egyptian room, are several examples of "soul-weighing," delineated upon rolls of the Ritual of the Dead. Several of them are of the Ptolemaic age, and some belong to that of other dynasties of a very much earlier date. These very singularly illustrate the subject. Here we find Osiris, the judge, seated, often holding that cross and ring, sometimes called the "Key of the Nile," said to signify "Life," and standing before him "Thoth" (ibis-headed), with roll and pen, waiting to record the judgment. Behind him are the scales, in which the good and bad deeds of the departed are being weighed. Horus (hawk-headed) stands by the scale in which are the actions of the deceased, whilst Anubis (jackal-headed) is by that of the soul. There is also a figure of the shade of the deceased imploring mercy. To understand the ideas on the subject it is best to quote the Ritual of the Dead, as translated by Dr. Birch* from the Turin text of Lepsius. In the 125th chapter the soul pleads its cause thus before Osiris: "Oh ye Lords of truth I have brought ye truth. Rub ye away my faults. I have not privily done evil against mankind I have had no acquaintance with evil I have not made the labouring man do more than his task daily I have not been idle I have not murdered I have not done fraud to men I have not falsified measures. . . . Let the Osiris (the deceased) go; ye know he is without fault, without evil, within sin, without crimes. . . . He has given food to the hungry, drink to the thirsty, clothes to the naked."

On a sarcophagus in Sir John Soane's Museum we get a variation of treatment, which bears a little upon our subject in other directions. Here Osiris is seated, holding the symbol of the T cross before alluded to,

* Vol. v. of Bunsen's *Egypt's Place in Universal History*.

and in his left hand a pastoral crook, in no way differing in principle from that of the bishops in early ages. The balance is held by Horus, who stands on the top of a flight of steps of nine grades, on which are souls, representing, according to Champollion, the nine grades of society; but for this he has no authority; therefore may it not be, rather, the "Ladder" to heaven? The analogy is close, as the souls are ascending for judgment. Dr. Birch refers this sarcophagus to Sethos I., B.C. 1489 to 1388.

As we progress farther eastwards the same thoughts are found again. In the religion of the Zenda-vesta, Mithra and Rashné-Rast weigh the actions of men on the bridge Tchinevad—*i.e.* the Strait bridge—which separates earth from heaven. In the system of Brahma, Yama, the king or lord of justice, has souls weighed before him, and the good and evil spirits produce his good and evil deeds. There are many hymns in the Rig-Veda addressed to him as lord of the dead, as opposed to Agni (*ignis*), the spirit of life. In that of Buddha, it is Shinje, lord of the dead, called also Choigal—in Sanscrit, Dharma-raja—king of the law, who is the soul-weigher. In the religion of Mahomet, St. Gabriel takes that office, apparently in opposition to St. Michael in the Christian mythology.

The mediæval ideas upon the offices of the "Angel," and on "soul-weighing," are set forth in the Dialogues of St. Gregory, and they will be found to have no material differences from those anciently entertained in the East. He says "that on the point of separation of the soul from the body, the good and bad angels come, and the merits and demerits of the man are weighed. The good angel alleges and recites the man's good works, the bad angel recalling to memory all the evil ones. And if, indeed, the bad preponderate over the good, so that he departed in mortal sin, immediately the soul is delivered to the torturers, who thrust the man, or his soul, down to the prison of hell to eternal punish-

ment. But if he deceased in charity, without mortal sin, yet in some that may be purgeable, the good angels conduct him into Purgatory, from which, after being purged, they lead him into Paradise. But if, indeed, he departed in so much charity that all the rust of sin was consumed, so that nothing purgeable remained, immediately the holy angels received him, and carried him to the kingdom of heaven."* By the light afforded by these passages, mediæval art may be completely understood in reference to this subject, as well as the office of the angel as the guardian and protector of the soul.

In our picture, the figure of the Archangel simply holds out the scales in which the merits and demerits are being poised one against the other. A demon on the opposite side, dragging at his back a large number of souls, bound behind him with a rope, strives to touch one scale to send up the beam. There is much obliteration of the small figures in custody, but the intention is quite clear. A figure of a soul is approaching the Archangel in a supplicating attitude, as if to avert the threatened evil. The feeling of this suggests to us the endeavour of Satan to possess himself of a soul, given in that early spiritual romance, "*Pèlerinage de l'Ame*," of which a translation was printed by Caxton. The soul is saved by the intervention of St. Michael. A similar idea occurs in the Egyptian papyri of the Ritual of the Dead, before alluded to. On the other side of St. Michael are three souls, all females, who are being conducted by an angel to the ladder. The three together shew that they have a relation or association with each other, and are thus specially distinguished. Probably, therefore, they represent the three Marys, as there are no other three female saints who occupy so high a dignity, connected with each other in the sacred narrative of the Passion. The angel has a purse hanging

* Quoted in "*Sermones, Dormi securè*," Sermo LVII.—"*De Sancto Michaelo*."

at his girdle, the meaning of which is, perhaps, that it contains the almsgivings; he also holds in his left hand a tablet, the record of the suffrages of the faithful, and of the good deeds. It is curious that the angel on the opposite side of the ladder holds one so much smaller; but this may well mean that he had less to record. When every little detail seems to have had a signification, even such a point as this must not be left unnoticed. It will be seen that, whilst we have fortunate souls moving towards the ladder, there are two unfortunate ones who are falling into the abyss below. They have been weighed, and found wanting. Such then is the description of this very remarkable work; but it is now necessary to point out its bearing on the history of art in this country.

It is first essential to decide upon its date; and there are certain details that help us directly to this end. The most important of these is the "Tree of Knowledge," because here we have conventional ornament, which can scarcely lead us much astray. Now this is identical in character with what is found in a MS., 383 in the Lansdowne Collection, British Museum. And in this same authority, we get also a reproduction of that peculiar thrusting out of drapery, as if agitated by the wind, which is seen in the figures of both the angels standing by the ladder; and of the figure of the demon at the end of the composition, shewing a front face. The manuscript belongs to the twelfth century, and may be taken as a test of the period at which this painting was executed. There are other indications which point to the same era, the chief of which is the interlacing border at the top. One must, however, not be so vague as to leave it to so large an interval; for the twelfth century was an active time, one of great change, and full of intellectual life. The architecture of the aisles is Pointed, and it was on the south face of the respond, supporting the first arch, that a figure was found, unluckily destroyed in the Rector's absence. So the painting must be subsequent to the erection of the aisles. The character

of this addition is Early English, and therefore cannot be referred to an earlier date than the closing half of the twelfth century. Perhaps it would be safer ground to say that the painting can hardly be prior to 1170, though we might extend the range of time twenty years later. Since the above was written the original story of the drunken pilgrim has been found, and this, speaking of a period between 1197-1198, confirms the argument from other data, and the picture must therefore be referred to the earliest years of the thirteenth century at the latest. The importance of this work at such a period is very great, and it is gratifying that it has been preserved in such a generally good condition. Archæology owes great thanks to the Rector, to whose acute observation and judgment this is due.

The execution demands a few words. It is remarkable that there is no filling-up of features in the figures, excepting those of the demons and that of the "usurer," for which there were especial reasons. The features of a few figures are given, because they are profiles, and part of an external outline, and doubtless to subserve, as they do most cleverly, certain expressions. But even here, there are no eyes put in; they are therefore merely *silhouettes*, and obey the same law which the artist has evidently laid down for himself. In fact, it is a bit of art-writing, truly hieroglyphic, to serve the purpose of instruction only, and not for any egotistical self-assertion. It is quite essential that this principle should be perfectly understood when we have to consider mediæval art. Some may think the work was left unfinished, but this is quite an untenable position. It is very unlikely that the artist would, had he intended to put them in, have left the features, and the details of hands and feet, to the last. It would have been giving himself needless trouble, for he would have had to have shifted his scaffold; an operation to be avoided: he certainly finished as he went on.

The outlines shew great ease and a ready hand, and it will be seen they frequently cross each other;

that is to say, one figure before another shews the form of the limbs of that behind, as if it were transparent. One might almost imagine that he intended to indicate that they were shades. But this view is not quite feasible, as he carries the same practice into his ornament.

The composition is clever and ingenious. On the ladder the figures are very varied, and the attitudes well contrasted, and throughout they are designed with great simplicity, always following the end in view, without the slightest affectation, which, it may here be noted, is of frequent occurrence later in the thirteenth century.

The picture is painted in tempera and not in fresco*; the colours used are red and yellow ochre, a little native cinnabar, and white. Women are only distinguished by the colour of their hair, which is yellow, except in one or two special instances; the hair of men red, except when massed in locks. White is used as a flesh-ground, except in the case of the demons, who are red and yellow, and sometimes left the colour of the ground formed by the plaster. The whole of the background is red, and was not painted, but simply rubbed in in a dry or chalky condition. But this appearance may be due to disintegration.

The mental part of the work most requires our attention. The convention of the "Ladder" is certainly of ancient ecclesiastical use, as is seen by the examples alluded to, but may not have been of much earlier adoption than the twelfth century. But here the artist, in the combination of the elements he has employed, has shewn an original mind. He has

* This term "fresco" is so constantly used, and is so exceedingly improper, that it ought at once to be given up. All mediæval paintings in our churches are in tempera, and of a common kind; the material used with the colours being doubtless a size made of parchment shreds. Even in Italy there is but little true fresco-painting until the fourteenth century, when the ancient practice was revived. There is such a speciality in the process of true fresco-painting (*fresco buono*) that it can never be confounded with any other mode.

selected his materials carefully, and put them together so as best to tell the story, whilst, at the same time, he has created nothing. He may well be compared to Andrea Orcagna, that most thoughtful Italian, whose paintings of the "Last Doom" and the "Triumph of Death," in the Campo Santo at Pisa, attest the words of Vasari, who tells us he was in the Poems of Dante "molto studioso." To the artist of the Chaldon painting the same term may be well applied, for he was well instructed in all those works which were not only antecedent to Dante's era, but actually forestall the plan of his great poem; and he had besides this a special knowledge of those floating legendary stories, which afterwards were compiled together by such a man as Herolt. This shews us that he could scarcely have been a layman, but was probably a brother of some religious house, following his vocation in that loving spirit which formed the life of so many of the early painters, such as Fra Angelico da Fiesole, Lippi, Domenico, etc.

It is a question to interest, though not capable of any direct answer, as to whether this painting may be claimed by an English hand. It is rarely that we have any data in these early works for even forming an opinion. It was conventional art, not taught from the study of nature; therefore the given rules, especially as it was under ecclesiastical government, would be taught mechanically, and all that could be designated "style" was absent. We trace in it the influence of the Greek or Byzantine school, but at a time of transition to an epoch of advance and progress. Schools of art were more easily formed upon the Continent, and some monasteries had long been renowned as such. Of these St. Gall, by the Lake Constance, produced artists even in the ninth and tenth centuries, many of whose names have been preserved. But had art not been taught or practised in England, it would not follow that Englishmen had not studied it in the monastic schools abroad.

There is one point, however, that cannot be passed

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over when we are considering this question. The painter was familiar with stories that had only just been written by a monk of the Cistercian Order, which order was at this time at the height of its influence. Whatever was the nationality, therefore, to which he belonged, he would not have been other than a monk of this order, for he could not else have been acquainted with the works of Cæsarius. For let us remember it was not an age of the printing-press, of publishers, or advertisements. Cæsarius mentions a painter monk of his order who travelled about practising his art in a very benevolent manner. *Dialogus Miraculorum*, Dist. 8, c. xxiv. This points to one of German or Flemish origin, though, as above stated, it is not conclusive.

The shape of the bottle before alluded to is French, such as we are still accustomed to see wines imported in. That might be an argument for an artist of that country, if it were not likely that wines were imported in bottles. Our dynasty in the twelfth century was closely connected with France, and monks migrating to England were by no means uncommon. A community of intercourse always subsisted with certain monastic societies, which spread art and literature amongst them, with interchange of thought. A distinction of country could not be seen in art founded upon rules almost mechanical. But, as we do know that a great deal of art was in active life throughout the twelfth century in England, and also associated with English names, there is no good reason why, as William the Englishman was an able successor to William of Sens in the fabric of the Cathedral of Canterbury, an English painter could not be found able to execute the painting at Chaldon. Whoever he was, he was a worthy forerunner to that great Italian, Andrea Orcagna, with whose mind he certainly had much in common; and when we think of the execution, we must remember that in this comparison he antedated him by 180 years. When the time comes for a history of the early ecclesiastical art of

England to be written, this work at Chaldon must find a prominent place. It is greatly to be desired that all to whom the chance of such discoveries may fall will do their best, if not to preserve, at least to secure a permanent record, by having the whole of it traced. Much has been discovered of late years during restorations, but it has been too often lost for want of proper supervision, and interest sufficiently strong among local authorities.

It ought not to be forgotten that such works are an infallible record of the popular religious teaching of our ancestors. They stand apart from all controversy, as we cannot deny nor evade that which appeals to our sight, and by illustrating them from the sermons, moral lessons, and religious stories of the time, we get a mass of evidence untouched by the ordinary ecclesiastical historians. In fact by uncovering and describing them we are displaying so many pages of "the book of the laity."

That book, the main instrument in the religious instruction of our forefathers throughout Christendom—whose influence can be shewn even in the poetry of Spenser and Shakespeare—ought not to be despised even in its rudest efforts, or in its most blurred pages. We ought never to forget the difference between our times and theirs.

"Knowledge to their eyes her ample page,
Rich with the spoils of Time, did ne'er unfold."

Whilst we, with a few shillings in our pockets, are able to possess ourselves of a literature which the proudest monastery could not boast of. Thus, looking back upon the past, we may perhaps better estimate our glorious privileges, and ask our consciences if we fitly use them.



